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SOURCE Akhir Sa'ah.

US, GREAT BRITAIN IN CONTEST FOR INFLUENCE IN LIBYA

[Comment: The following information was taken from an article by Hamdi Fuad in the Cairo weekly periodical Akhir Sa'ah of 10 December 1952. Fuad, alleges that there is a conflict between the US and Great Britain over Libya.]

The US and Great Britain have begun fighting over the most important military bases in Libya in preparation for a future war in which atomic bombs will be used.

The US, the only big power with no strategic bases in the Middle East, has been the quickest among the powers to get these bases at any cost. Its primary purpose is air bases for huge atomic bomb stores.

Great Britain, which finds it difficult to give up its interests in the Middle East, especially in Libya, has been watching the US very closely. Thus, the cold war began between the two powers, who give the outward appearance of being allies, but who are actually fighting each other.

The US prepared a draft treaty and submitted it to the Libyan government. Some of the important provisions of this draft treaty are as follows:

1. The US would lease from Libya the Mallaha area in Tripolitania for the establishment of airfields.
2. The US would lease from Libya the Kambout region in Cyrenaica and the Hun airfield in southern Tripolitania to establish atomic bomb stores and air bases.
3. The Libyan government would have the right to inspect these strategic areas.

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4. The US would pay an annual rent of 10 million dollars for the use of these lands.

5. Libya would be given four naval vessels.

6. The US would undertake to supply the Libyan army with military experts whose salaries would be paid by the US, and the US would also equip the Libyan army with military supplies for the planned Libyan army of 20,000 men.

Great Britain has noted that the treaty as drafted would eventually put an end to British influence, because it has been agreed previously that Cyrenaica would be a British sphere of influence, while Tripolitania would be a sphere of influence for the US. The US, however, has been consolidating its air activities in Cyrenaica, activities which have annoyed the British government.

Great Britain intervened to amend this draft treaty and proposed the inclusion of the following amendments:

1. Arming of Libya's forces may not be effected, except with the concurrence of the US and Great Britain.

2. Libya would not be given any naval vessels.

3. Annual rent for the air bases may not exceed one million dollars.

The Libyans refused the treaty and suspended negotiations; and King Idris as-Sanusi and Premier Mahmud al-Muntas'ir succeeded in not submitting the treaty to Parliament last April, as stipulated.

The US felt the gravity of the situation, as it was aware of the impending visit of King Idris to Egypt and its subsequent important diplomatic results. The US then immediately recalled its minister to Libya and asked him to prepare a report on the reasons leading to the refusal of the treaty and the proposals which he thinks would win Libya's quick acceptance.

In the meantime, Great Britain exploited the situation by preparing an important political draft treaty, the main emphasis of which is to acquire new military bases. Some of the provisions of this treaty are as follows:

1. Great Britain would have the right to grant strategic areas to its allies in the provinces of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania.

2. Great Britain would meet the deficit in the budgets of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, which amounts to 1,500,000 Egyptian pounds.

3. Great Britain would have the right to appoint financial consultants for all the Libyan ministries to supervise budgetary allocations and spending.

4. No limit would be set on the time British forces may stay in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania.

5. The British minister to Libya would be the dean of the diplomatic corps.

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As a result of these diplomatic developments, the US decided to put its treaty into effect without having Libya agree to it. It actually resorted to occupying the air bases in Kambout by a simple and easy method: dropping its troops and equipment by parachute. It also occupied the Hun airfield in southern Tripolitania, where 5,000 US families are now living and where six cargo planes land daily, loaded with what the residents of that area need.

Thus, the US has been able to establish its first atomic bomb bases in the Middle East and in the Mediterranean area itself.

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